

November 21, 2013

Mark Lere Habitat Restoration Program Officer Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Helena, MT

Dear Mark.

As the fisheries biologist overseeing the Gallatin watershed, I would like to voice my support for the Bogert Creek Enhancement Committee's request for a Future Fisheries grant to help fund the Bozeman Creek at Bogert Park Enhancement Project.

Bozeman Creek is an example of an urban stream that has suffered from many indignities by the hand of man. The reach through the City of Bozeman has been straightened, channelized and bank armored to the extent that much of its natural function has been severely compromised, physically, biologically and aesthetically.

This project will improve the streams hydraulic function, riparian vegetation, aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat, and allow it access to a floodplain. I have surveyed the fish population in the creek through the park and while this reach should be capable of producing wild trout in the 20 inch class, it is currently well below its potential of numbers and size of fish, both sport and non-game. There is no doubt in my mind that the fish population would be enhanced by this project.

Beyond the environmental benefits, I appreciate the project's focus on encouraging community education and participation in the restoration project.

Bogert Park is heavily used by families with children. The creek currently has few areas where the public may access it safely, especially small children. Part of the enhancement plan will provide safe areas for the public to interact with the creek, from my perspective an important 'hook' to foster in kids an interest in the outdoor world that can last a lifetime.

Planning for this project has energized a diverse group of citizens, governmental agencies and non-profit organizations to work for the betterment of Bozeman Creek and the Bozeman community. I have been a member of this committee since the beginning of planning and am convinced that this is a project which will deliver a high profile educational example of stream restoration while directly addressing water quality, stream function and riparian habitat issues. This stream enhancement project in Bogert Park will be a great 'first step' to enlisting further public interest and support for restoring other reaches of Bozeman Creek in the future.

Sincerely,

Mike Vaughn

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